



Public Affairs & Communications Officer Recruitment pack

Thank you for your interest in the role of Public Affairs and Communications Officer at the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance (ARMA).

ARMA exists to improve musculoskeletal (MSK) services. We are a membership organisation which brings together patient, research and healthcare professional organisations working in MSK health. Working together as an alliance we have a powerful voice to influence policy and improve standards of care across the UK. Our members range from large charities such as Versus Arthritis to small professional bodies such as the Rheumatology Nursing Network.

Our priorities

Each year our priorities are set by our members. For 2022 and 2023 these priorities are:

- Engagement with the NHS England Best MSK Health programme
- MSK health inequalities

Some of our recent achievements and activities include:

- Represented on the Programme Board and some workstreams for Best MSK Health programme, so having influence over the content and direction of the programme.
- Engagement with a range of other NHS England programmes and teams including social prescribing team, IAPT team, My Planned Care programme and work on support for people with chronic pain.
- Engagement with a range of COVID-19 related activities. The COVID-19 resource page on our website continues to be the most visited page.
- Curate a page of resources related to MSK Health equalities on our website.
- Held a round table on health equalities and MSK, chaired by NHS England's Director of Health Equalities.
- We are currently planning a major inquiry into MSK health inequalities.
- Published a pain policy position and a core offer for pain services with positive engagement with NHS England following these.
- Produced a guide for social prescribing services on supporting people with MSK conditions.

Application process

Please submit cv and covering letter outlining how you meet the criteria set out below to sbrown@arma.uk.net. Closing date noon on Monday 10th October 2022.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview via zoom on Friday 21 October 2022.

Working for ARMA

We are a small organisation, meaning that the post holder will have exposure to all aspects of the work, as well as leading on communications and on specific policy projects. You will work closely with our CEO, Sue Brown, who has over 25 years' experience of policy and influencing work in the health and social care sector. You will also be working closely with staff in our 38 member organisations. This makes the role an excellent opportunity to develop experience in many aspects of this type of work in a charity.

- The work of ARMA is overseen by a Board of Trustees.
- There are two staff: CEO and Public Affairs and Communications Officer
- Finance, IT and web management are covered by freelancers. The web manager will be a key contact for this role.
- The 38 member organisations set the direction and priorities of the organisation and also support our work in a range of ways.

Working arrangements

ARMA has no offices so both staff are home based. The majority of our meetings are virtual, using Zoom. A few (around 4 per year) are face to face in London. There may be some other conferences or away days face to face. However, the post holder needs to be able to remain motivated while working predominantly from home.

Hours for this role are 17.5 per week. The CEO will agree the usual weekly working pattern with the post holder.

ARMA divides our work into core and project. Project work happens only when there is funding available. There may be the option for additional hours for this post to help deliver projects. This is optional and not guaranteed. It will be dependent on the requirements of specific projects and would be discussed on a case by case basis.

Key working relationships

Internally the two main contacts are the CEO and freelance web manager. There will also be some contact with trustees.

Externally the post works regularly with policy and communications staff of our members. Some contact also with Directors and CEOs of members.

There will also be some contact with other stakeholders in the sector including staff at NHS England, other health charities, NHS staff, etc.

Musculoskeletal Health

Musculoskeletal is a term which covers a wide range of conditions affecting the bones, joints and muscles. This includes osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, back pain, and a range of inflammatory and autoimmune conditions. Some of these conditions are treated using medication which suppresses the immune system. This means that some people with MSK conditions were shielding during 2020 and some mount little if any response to COVID vaccines. There is also a significant backlog of work due to COVID, including long waiting

times for joint replacement surgery and community MSK services. ARMA has therefore done a considerable amount of work in the last 2 years on COVID related issues.

Despite being the largest cause of years lived with disability, MSK conditions have historically had little attention in health policy. There is very little about MSK in the NHS England Long Term Plan for instance. In recent years this has changed with the introduction in 2021 of an ambitious NHS England Best MSK Health programme and more recently the appointment of two MSK Clinical Leads in Wales. ARMA has significant engagement and influence with both of these.

Job description

Salary: £32,418 - £34,209 per annum + home working allowance, pro-rata

Hours: 17.5 hours per week, homeworking with occasional face to face meetings. Additional hours may sometimes be available to carry out project work. This is optional and not guaranteed.

Job Purpose

To lead ARMA communications and assist the CEO on policy and public affairs work. To work collaboratively with ARMA members and key external stakeholders, to support delivery of the strategic plan. The role includes chairing meetings of member policy and communications leads, and representing ARMA externally and as required.

Specific duties of the post-holder

- Support CEO in delivery of ARMA's strategic, policy and operational plans
- Chair and manage the ARMA Policy and Communication meetings, producing the agenda and supporting documents for member policy and communications leads meetings, and ensuring the delivery of agreed actions
- Lead on/contribute to production of policy briefings and consultation responses as required.
- Represent ARMA externally at relevant meetings and events
- Assist the CEO in policy and public affairs work as required
- Develop policy communications with ARMA members and key external stakeholders on relevant issues and activities, including Bone and Joint Week and through the newsletter and social media.
- Edit, manage and develop the ARMA Newsletter to support ARMA's strategy.
- Lead ARMA's media and social media (twitter) activity to target key stakeholders and audiences.
- Manage and maintain the ARMA website as required (working with the web manager)

Experience and skills

	Criteria	Essential/ Desirable
Skills and abilities	<p>Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, written and oral</p> <p>Excellent organisation and time management skills</p> <p>Ability to work unsupervised</p> <p>Ability to work effectively as part of a team</p> <p>Ability to manage a number of competing tasks</p> <p>Excellent administrative and knowledge management skills</p> <p>Computer literacy particularly working knowledge of Microsoft Office package</p> <p>Confidence with on line meetings (e.g. Teams or Zoom)</p>	<p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Desirable</p>
Experience	<p>Experience of working in a communications, public affairs or policy role</p> <p>Experience of leading on communications and public affairs in a membership organisation</p> <p>Experience of drafting and producing reports and publications</p> <p>Experience of using twitter to promote key messages and grow reach.</p>	<p>Essential</p> <p>Desirable</p> <p>Desirable</p> <p>Desirable</p>
Knowledge & understanding	<p>Understanding of the issues affecting people living with musculoskeletal conditions and/or other long-term conditions</p> <p>Knowledge of how health services are delivered in the UK and of current health policy-making structures in the UK.</p>	<p>Desirable</p> <p>Desirable</p>
Personal qualities	<p>Commitment to ARMA's vision and values</p> <p>Flexibility to work occasionally outside normal office hours, and willingness to travel if necessary</p> <p>Access to a suitable home working environment. ARMA will fund any necessary equipment and provide an ARMA computer. The post holder is responsible for ensuring a suitable space to work and security for ARMA equipment and data.</p>	<p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p>